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IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.
House of Lords, Thursday, Feb. 18.

The order of the day being read, Lord Bathurst rose. It was not his intention to detain their lordships long on the subject of the numerous papers which had been laid upon the table, relative to the negotiations which had taken place between his majesty's government and that of the United States of America.—Upon the items or details of those voluminous documents, which diversity, or shades at least, of opinion, might exist in the minds of many of their lordships—and whenever it should be the pleasure of the house to enter into an examination of those points, he felt not the least disposition to shrink from scrutiny. His Lordship then briefly stated the well known progress of the negotiations, the early disposition on the part of America, so early as in May, towards aggression. The orders in council were repealed. He should not then enter into any discussion respecting the policy which first originated, or afterwards revoked, those orders—but there was every fair reason to suppose that as the alleged dissatisfaction of the American government originated and depended on those orders, their abrogation would restore amity, or at least a disposition towards concord and good will.—How far those reasonable prospects were answered, was too well known. [His lordship recapitulated, the measure of the armistice, and the spirit evinced by America on that occasion—the subsequent blockade of the Chesapeake—and shewed distinctly the difference acknowledged by the law of nations, between the right *defacto* and the right by *notification*.] An opinion he knew had been entertained, that the blockade ought to have been at once adopted, and rigorously enforced—but various considerations of a mercantile nature operated to prevent or withhold such rigor. Not less than five millions of West India property was involved in the question, and the pressure of such rigor would have recoiled on ourselves. At the period when America chose to declare war against England; she had clearly no object of wise or national policy in view, but barely the prospect of surprising our homeward West India fleet. In that pursuit however, their commander, commodore Rodgers, failed. Upon that event, Mr. Monroe, indeed, would consent to an armistice, provided the British government would relinquish the right of impressment—and upon the admission or rejection of that right, the question of peace or war was made to depend. He would here call upon their lordships to decide, whether a right always exercised by this country, and not only by this country, but by others, was to be abandoned on the occasion alluded to? America affected to entertain notions of maritime rights that were applicable to general commerce, and the privileges of independent states—but she had never brought forward, or stated specifically, or any way that we had heard, her code of regulations. The mode, for instance, how sailors belonging to England were to be prevented from entering into the American service, had never been described. Of the abuse, in that instance of the American regulations, he should instance the case of the Chesapeake, in which it appeared, that certain deserters from his majesty's fleet had been received and were detained. Application was made to the American commander for the surrender of those men—and the American commander declared upon his honor, that no such men were on board his ship. The English officer, by an act (which it was not his intention to justify) proceeded on his complete knowledge of the fact, & found the identical men on board the Chesapeake, of whom he was in search. The violence, in the first instance, was loudly complained of by the American government, but no steps whatever were taken, on the other hand, by that government, to censure or discountenance the practice which had led to it. Another instance occurred at Annapolis, where an English sailor had been forcibly carried on board the Wasp American ship, and not

only there detained, but flogged, and afterwards sent on board the Constitution, another American ship. These acts were notorious, unpalliated and undenied by the American government. The practice of the American government, as tending to encourage desertion, was notorious. Their limit of five or four years citizenship in any part of America, afforded a scope for that purpose, which was obvious and incalculable. Upon what ground, then could the American government, or Mr. Monroe, object to a regulation which had for its object a clear and definite prevention of abuses felt and acknowledged to exist? The right of search had long existed, and though it had, at some times been disputed, yet it stood upon a basis of such solidity and general acknowledgement in the government of this country, that until he should hear of some adequate substitute, he should not be persuaded to give it up. He hoped, however, that whatever differences of opinion in other matters might prevail, there was but one sentiment of accord in the object and principles of the ADDRESS, which he should submit to their lordships. Even if different notions or opinions should be entertained respecting the rejection of the American proposition, let us not (said the noble lord) appear so degraded from habits of trade, or so broken by the urgent and pressing calamities of an unprecedented war, as not to meet with unanimous accord in our address to the Prince Regent on the present occasion. [Here the Address was read. See Commons.]

The marquis of Lansdowne expressed his satisfaction at the statement which the noble secretary had made, and hoped that the vote of the house would be unanimous in favor of the motion. But while he delivered that decided opinion in favor of the address, its principle and its object, he must nevertheless lament, that the modes of conciliation which might have been used, were not at the proper season attended to by his majesty's ministers. The revocation of the orders in council was a measure which he, as well as all the country, could not fail to approve; yet he, as well as the country at large, had yet to lament that such a salutary and necessary measure had not been previously adopted. But as it seemed to be admitted that the hostile temper of America had been chiefly excited by the orders in council, it was in the same measure to be looked for, that hostile temper should abate on the event of the withdrawing or cancelling of that offensive measure. Upon the subject of impressed seamen, that was a practice which rested not upon abuses. The principle was acknowledged, and could not be disputed by America in reference to the government of England. Abuses indeed were always open to correction; and American subjects when ascertained to be such, were unquestionably exempt from the arm of English impress. He wished not to diverge from the main question, or to offer any arguments or suggestions which could impair the unanimity which he trusted would prevail in favor of the address proposed by the noble secretary. Yet he could not help expressing an earnest wish that notwithstanding all which had previously taken place, whether in the errors or prejudices of the different government as spirit of conciliation might take place and repair or reconcile as far as possible, all former differences. That was, in truth, the clear and substantial policy of both countries; and whatever might have been the opinions either in America or England respecting the justice or policy of the orders in council, the rescinding of them should naturally have opened the door of peace. If there was a country in the world where the popular opinion had peculiar influence on the government, that country was America. Peace was the interest, both of America and this country. But while he professed himself an advocate for peace, he was also just, and wherever war was just, it should be vigorous and effective. The naval rights of England had never been disputed; and if ever they were to be asserted firmly, the present was the time for that assertion. But how had the known and acknowledged superiority of the British navy been displayed in America? A power comparatively weak had baffled us, and captured our merchant ships without resistance. He could not but think, that ministers were reprehensible on that ground, and they ought to have taught America a different lesson. He so far approved of the general observation of the noble mover of the address, as

well as the tenor of the address, itself, that he should not withhold his free assent to it, who at the same time, he wished to express his earnest hope, that measure would be adopted to effect a cordial and effectual reconciliation with America.

Lord Melville would not detain their lordships long. He should confine himself to that part of that noble marquis's speech which referred to the naval force on the American station. That force was such as, according to all rational and political calculation, was adequate to its object; neither could it have been increased or augmented, without withdrawing from other services what could not be spared. The Baltic force, for instance, could not have been reduced, without a sacrifice beyond any proposed object; and if he could have anticipated the events that occurred he would not have advised the withdrawing, for any transatlantic purpose, one ship from the Baltic.

Marquis Wellesley fully agreed in the general tenor of the address. In its justice—in the importance of its object—in the importance of exerting all our powers for the end of bringing the enemy to a due sense of their situation with respect to the war with England—in the absolute necessity, upon all sound and rational views, of being unanimous in the prosecution of the present struggle, and pledging the legislature to the government; no man on those points could be more decided than himself. On those points, he thought the call of the noble lord (Bathurst) to the house wise & manly. But he wished that the address had stopped here; that other matters had not been suffered to mingle with it: in short, that it had not touched on the great and momentous question, of the mode in which the war had been carried on. Whether it had been carried on with the fitting vigor, was the main point after all; though on this he should reserve himself for the occasion, he hoped a speedy one, when it was to be brought before their lordships. (Hear.) The noble lord opposite (Melville) had said, that at the commencement of the war, the force on the coast of America was vastly superior to any that could be brought to oppose it but did the noble lord say how that force had been distributed—how far it was in the power of the officers on the station to meet the enemy?—for without some light here, every declaration of our superiority was idle. Was it to be said, that the American war was not foreseen? Could there be a doubt on the mind of any man—he did not speak of a man of peculiar understanding, but a man of plain and common sense, who perused the papers on the table—that America would plunge into some wild excess of this nature? The noble lord (Melville) asked, would we take all the measures of war before war? Would we blockade the ports, shut up the rivers, parade our fleets before her to insult and irritate? No man of common sense would recommend this either. But was there no other mode most obvious, most easy, most effectual and was not that to down and crush, at the first symptom of decided hostility, the naval means of America? The noble lord (Melville) said, that instructions had been sent to our officers, to act with vigor immediately upon the declaration of war. It might be so, but what was the use of instructions without the force to fulfil them. When their lordships were sending up their address to the Prince, it would not be unwise to insert into it, a resolution to press the war with more vigor than had been hitherto done. He regretted having troubled their lordships even so long, but he was anxious, that while he approved of the general object of the address, it should be understood, that he differed widely from it as to the conduct of the war.

Lord Liverpool must be permitted to notice some of the concluding expressions of the noble lord's (Wellesley's) speech. It was really to be regretted, that he had touched on subjects which might be discussed hereafter, and which only interrupted unanimity so important on the present occasion. As to the war's not being foreseen, he could not conceive that his noble friend (lord Melville) near him had so expressed himself. The war with America was long foreseen. It was long plain, that the government of that country was more influenced by passion than policy; and that the giddy and unwise step of coming to open variance with England was to be expected. But for this there appeared no remedy. The motives set forth by America were not her motives. Who could now believe that the right of impressment

was the actual cause? The right was, no doubt, an old and solemn right of England; but it was not of a nature to admit of modifications. Amicable discussions might have reduced the whole controversy to nothing; but was it to be believed that America wanted this? Who cried out the loudest in that country for war? Was it the Eastern States? Every man knew, that it was on them that the pressure, such as it was, must come. Almost all the impressed persons must be natives of the Eastern States, but they were almost unanimous; at least, the general sense of the country was distinctly for peace. Take another point. On the question of the orders in council, where was the war opposition to be found? In those Eastern States which alone could be affected by the orders.—(Hear. Hear.) These considerations were of importance to the truth. The war was not one of interest, but of passion and inflamed feelings. He would not now go into the subject which had been urged in the debate; when the time should come for examining the conduct of his majesty's government on that subject, he had no doubt that they could acquit themselves to the satisfaction of the house. The fact was, that every preparation had been made consistent with the regard which we ought to have to other quarters in which our interests were certainly not less pressing and peculiar. As to the imputations of negligence on our navy, for the escape of the enemy's squadron; so far from wondering that such circumstances sometimes occurred, he was only surprised that they occurred so seldom.—Look to the life of that, perhaps the greatest, but all events the most renowned of our naval captains, lord Nelson. See his failures in this instance, and the great events by which they were followed.—(Hear.) See that great officer suffer a powerful fleet, with 40,000 troops on board, to come out from the port which he was blockading, miss them perhaps by the excess of his naval skill and intrepidity, give them time to arrive in Egypt and even land their troops before he could come up with and destroy them. Let the escape of the French in 1805 be remembered, when they passed by Gibraltar, reached the West-Indies, returned to Europe, and never gave an opportunity to the British admiral till they had joined the Spanish fleet in Cadiz, and came out to give him battle; that battle, in which he consummated his glorious life by the greatest victory ever gained at sea. On the question of neutrals, he (Lord Liverpool) did not deny that they might be pressed by the pressure of the war; but if they were, they drew from it peculiar advantages. But had America a right to complain? Was there any country in Europe which had, in the same time, made the same advance in population, commerce the products of industry? And to what did she owe the very commerce of which she was so jealous, but to the superiority of the navy? Would she have a ship on the seas that divide her from the tumults of Europe but for the ships of Great Britain?—(Hear.) And was it not reasonable to have expected, that this might be felt by her; and that if there was any casual irritation, it would be passed over; any little object of dispute, it would be left to the decision of sober and friendly argument? But if America was led on by passion. It was fit that there should be no passion here; and that a war begun in justice, should receive the support—the rational and unanimous support of the legislature.

Lord Wellesley explained. He did not allude to the escapes of the enemy's ships, his only objection was to the principles of distribution of our force, which the noble lord (Melville) laid down.

Lord Melville hoped, he should not be so much wanting in the sense of his situation, as to state principles of the distribution of his majesty's fleet.

Lord Lansdowne explained. Lord Holland, in a short speech, expressed his belief, that from the extreme nicety of the point on which the negotiation broke off, it might not be altogether hopeless of renewal. On the question of naturalization there could be no doubt that the king had a right to the services of the natives of this country, and that the flag of the merchant could not protect them. But strong as were the demands America, we had made stronger in our day. He accidentally had taken up the Statute Book, on the table, and found a Statute of Anne, enacting that any man, not merely who resided in England, but in any other country